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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

File: MIG-23s

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

15 November 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Robert R. Bowie
Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

FROM : Arnold L. Horelick
National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

SUBJECT : Vance to Dobrynin Talking Points on the MIG-23s

1. At the State Department yesterday, Marshall Shulman asked me to read and comment on draft talking points, Vance to Dobrynin, on the MIG-23s, that State was preparing for NSC approval. My comments were, of course, informal and off the record, since the matter involved was a policy issue. I did give Shulman and the talking point drafters a quick briefing, reviewing the paper we prepared for you for Monday's SCC on the MIG-23s.

2. The draft talking points would have Vance inform Dobrynin that we had learned of the possibility that MIG-23s and 27s [Flogger D] were deployed in Cuba, that we were concerned about the ground attack capabilities of these aircraft, and want clarification. The paper was worded so as to indicate we were not demanding their withdrawal -- i.e., we could live with the small number now presumed to be there, but do not want that number increased. The last point suggested that questions would be raised in this country if the numbers of such aircraft delivered to Cuba were to grow and invoked the specter of a threat to SALT.

3. I told Shulman that in my personal opinion the broad approach of the draft talking points was OK, except for the last point which would convey the impression to the Soviets that the USG was itself really indifferent on national security grounds, is concerned primarily about domestic US public opinion, and is relying chiefly on shared Soviet concern over SALT to secure Soviet cooperation. Whatever truth there might be to this construction, I thought it would not be useful to communicate it to the Soviets. Shulman agreed and said he would revise to alter the flavor.

4. I also said that given that we have decided to raise this issue with the Soviets, I saw no point to conceding in advance our acceptance of ground attack versions of the MIG-23 that might already be there. I suggested he consider language that, while not conveying a demand that

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any aircraft now on the island must be withdrawn, left some uncertainty about our attitude toward their retention. To accept in advance and so readily their presence unnecessarily and prematurely weakened the principle we are saying may be involved.

5. Marshall said he would consider the last point as well. Unfortunately, all of this transpired during a five minute break between an ICCUSA meeting at State and a White House Sit Room meeting we were both rushing off to attend. Shulman and I both assume that the NSC will revise whatever State sends over, so we won't be sure until word comes back to State what Vance will actually tell Dobrynin. I have not seen the final State draft approved by Vance. Of course, all of this happened before the Evans and Novack column in the Post, which might affect White House calculations.

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Arnold L. Horelick

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